



# Rabbinic Recap

The week of May 26, 2017

## U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

### **President Trump's Visit Underscores Strong U.S.-Israel Relationship**

On May 22 and 23, President Donald J. Trump visited Israel as part of his first foreign trip in office. Throughout his visit, President Trump made clear his strong commitment to the U.S.-Israel relationship. On May 22, the president remarked at Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's residence: "Today, we reaffirmed the unbreakable bond of friendship between Israel and the United States—a friendship built on our shared love of freedom, our shared belief in human dignity, and our shared hope for an Israel at lasting peace. We want Israel to have peace." In his May 23 speech at the Israel Museum, President Trump expanded upon his remarks by stating, "I stand in awe of the accomplishments of the Jewish people, and I make this promise to you: My administration will always stand with Israel." President Trump described the U.S.-Israel relationship as being forged in common values, "But even as we strengthen our partnership in practice, let us always remember our highest ideals—let us never forget that the bond between our two nations is woven together in the hearts of our people—and their love of freedom, hope, and dignity for all." He also reiterated America's commitment to helping Israelis and Palestinians achieve peace: "As I've repeatedly said, I'm personally committed to helping Israelis and Palestinians achieve a peace agreement...Making peace however, will not be easy. We all know that. Both sides will face tough decisions, but with determination, compromise and a belief that peace is possible, Israelis and Palestinians can make a deal."

### **U.S., Israeli Air Forces Complete Joint Exercise**

The U.S. and Israeli Air Forces completed a joint training exercise held out of Israel's Uvda Air Base from May 7-17. The ten-day exercise—known as Juniper Falcon—simulated a variety of different operational scenarios with a focus on destroying mobile enemy targets, such as anti-aircraft missiles. The American and Israeli pilots also practiced evading enemy fighter jets and aerial defensive measures. "This training exercise is important as we face the situation around us, the dynamic nature of the different fighting fronts in the area, and operations by world powers—all of these create uncertainty. In this exercise, we incorporated the most advanced threats we see in the region," said a senior Israeli Air Force official. "This is a great opportunity for us work with our Israeli partners to exchange ideas and concepts and the meaningful cultural aspect that comes with those discussions," said Maj. Libby Music, the U.S. Air Force 37th Airlift Squadron detachment commander. "The biggest takeaway for us is the unique exchange of air tactics, drop zone and landing zone operations and maintenance procedures between our two militaries," said Capt. Wesley Dembek, the deputy of operations for the 37th Airlift Squadron. "This is also a great opportunity for us to train in an austere environment that challenges us to adapt and become more familiar with the region."

## IRAN

### **Key Senate Committee Adopts Bipartisan Iran Sanctions Legislation**

On May 25, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee overwhelmingly adopted The Countering Iran's Destabilizing Activities Act of 2017 (S.722) in an 18-3 vote. Authored by Sens. Bob Corker (R-TN), Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and Ben Cardin (D-MD), this key bipartisan legislation would impose sanctions targeting Iran's ballistic missile program, its destabilizing actions in the Middle East, and its conventional weapons trade. The legislation specifically mandates sanctions on persons that engage in any activity that materially contributes to Iran's ballistic missile activity. The mandate includes persons engaged in any efforts to manufacture, acquire, possess, develop, transport, transfer or use ballistic missiles. Another important provision authorizes the president to impose sanctions on Iranians responsible for human rights violations against other Iranians who seek to promote human rights or expose illegal government activity. "We can no longer allow the nuclear agreement with Iran to dictate U.S. policy throughout the Middle East, and this bill is an important first step in finally holding Iran accountable for their non-nuclear destabilizing activities," said Sen. Corker. "Iran is contributing to regional instability and has not demonstrated any interest in rejoining the community of responsible nations by halting its malign behavior. Today's bipartisan Committee passage of Iran legislation underscores Congress' role in articulating a roadmap for pushing back on Iran's aggressive actions," said Sen. Cardin. "Advancing this bipartisan bill sends a clear message to Iran that our nation will work to counter its aggression in the places like Syria and Yemen, its support for terrorist groups like Hezbollah, its development of ballistic missile technology, and its serial violations of human rights," said Sen. Bob Casey (D-PA)

## ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

### **Why Israel is a Fast-Moving Force in Smart Transportation**

In June 2013, 250 Israeli smart-transportation visionaries flocked to the inaugural EcoMotion "unconference" to share their crazy fantasies about the future of moving people from one place to another. Only four years later, leaders of the global automotive and transportation industry were among 1,500 participants at the fifth annual EcoMotion Main Event at the Peres Center in Jaffa on May 18. It hasn't taken long for Israel to emerge as a significant source of innovation for autonomous and connected vehicles, navigation, public transportation, alternative fuels, super-efficient engines, urban parking and environment-friendly personal and mass transportation. More than 500 Israeli companies involved in this sector have raised a combined nearly \$20 billion over the past four years. "Five or six years ago, who'd have thought Israel would be a potential player in the global industry of transportation? We don't even have any automakers," says Lior Zeno-Zamanski, executive director of EcoMotion, a nonprofit community initiated by the National Program for Alternative Fuels and Smart Transportation and the Israeli Innovation Institute, with the support of the Ministry of Economy. "The megatrend in this world is electric, connected and autonomous—and that put Israel in the center because those are things we are really good at," she tells [ISRAEL21c](#). EcoMotion's year-round workshops, competitions, hackathons, meetups and investor events have helped grow its community to more than 700 affiliated organizations. About 200 startups were represented at the all-day conference, which drew 250 prominent overseas attendees. "Everyone is coming to see Israeli technology for smart mobility. Our smart-transport ecosystem is becoming a global center together with Silicon Valley. We even met a lot of people from the Valley at our event," Zeno-Zamanski notes.